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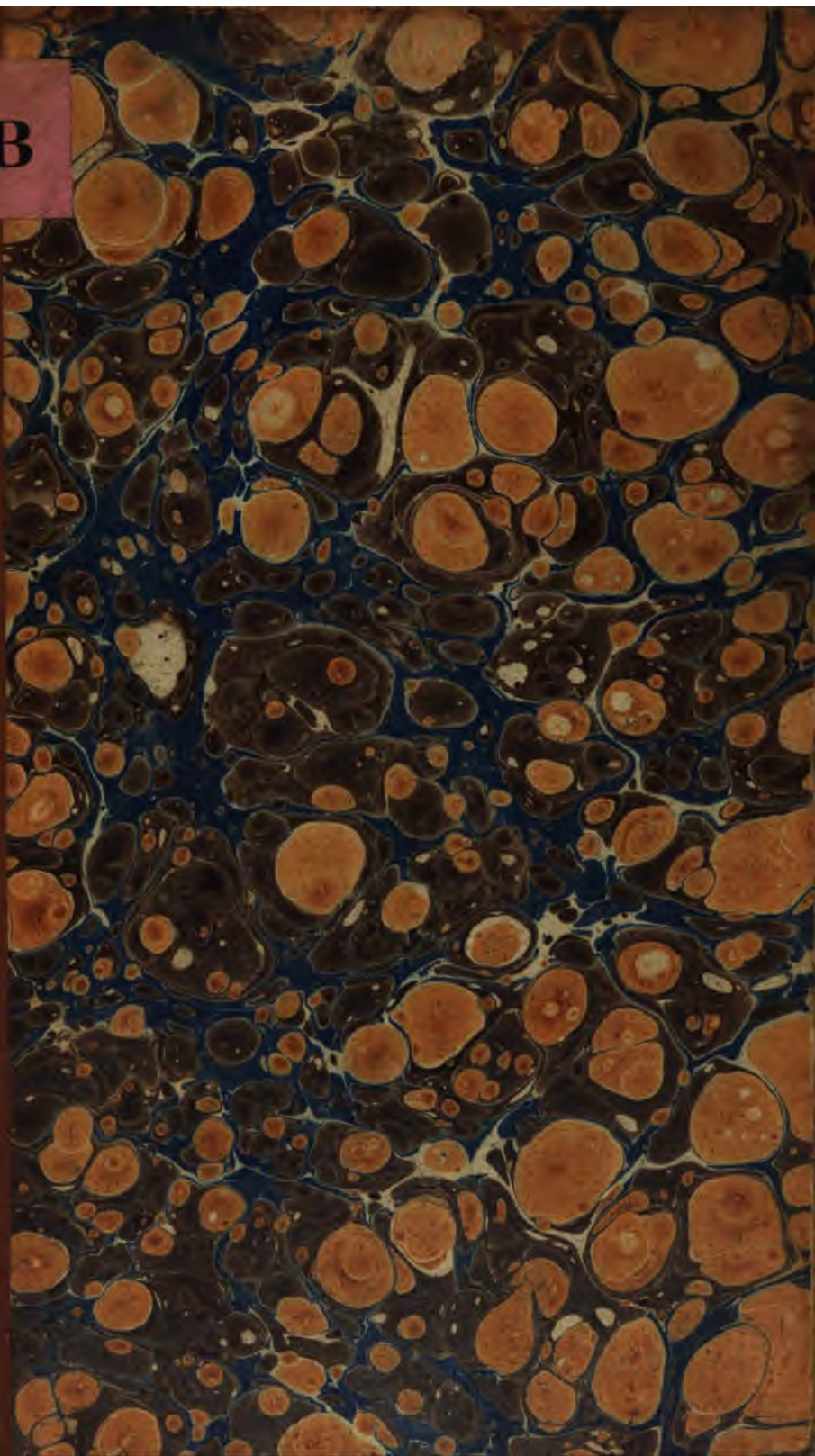
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AN APPEAL
IN BEHALF OF
COLONEL STODDART.
AND
CAPTAIN CONOLLY.

BY
CAPTAIN GROVER, F.R.S., F.R.A.S.

AN
APPEAL TO THE BRITISH NATION

IN BEHALF OF

COLONEL STODDART
AND
CAPTAIN CONOLLY,

NOW IN

CAPTIVITY IN BOKHARA.

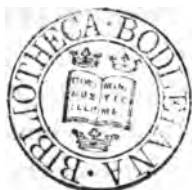
BY

CAPTAIN GROVER, UNATTACHED,

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY, AND OF THE ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL
SOCIETY; MEMBER OF THE ROYAL INSTITUTION OF GREAT
BRITAIN, AND OF THE CONGRESS OF THE
SCIENZIATI ITALIANI.

LONDON:
HATCHARD AND SONS, PICCADILLY.

1843.



LONDON:
PRINTED BY MOYES AND BARCLAY, CASTLE STREET,
LEICESTER SQUARE.

AN APPEAL,

&c. &c.

THE object of the following pages is to endeavour to excite the public sympathy in favour of two British officers, Colonel Stoddart and Captain Connolly, who were seized by the Ummeer of Bokhara, while employed in the service of their country on a diplomatic mission, and who (if alive) are still retained in captivity, and to call the public attention to an Address to the Officers of the British Army, from the celebrated missionary the Reverend Dr. Joseph Wolff, which appeared in the *Morning Herald* newspaper of July 6th, in which the reverend doctor states his belief that these gentlemen are still alive, and proposes to start immediately for Bokhara, if furnished with the necessary funds, without seeking one “*single farthing as a compensation,*” even in case of complete success.

The fate of these brave men, I am sorry to say, has excited far less interest in *England* than on the Continent. This may, perhaps, arise from the very natural supposition of Englishmen that their Government has left no means untried to save those who are suffering in their country's cause. I think, however, that the perusal of the following pages will convince the reader that the British Government, far from attempting the release of these gallant fellows, has not even taken the trouble of ascertaining the simple fact of their existence.

I feel that I am making a grave and serious charge against the Government; but I can really draw no other inference from the facts, which I now lay before the public, as the only means I see left of rescuing my friend and his fellow-sufferer from their dreadful state of captivity, brought upon them by the faithful discharge of their duty.

With Captain Conolly I have not the pleasure of being acquainted.

Colonel Stoddart was formerly in the Royal Staff Corps. In the year 1833 he was placed on half-pay by reduction, and became Secretary to the United Service Institution, in Scotland Yard; I was on the council of that institution, and thus my acquaintance with him began. He was also Secretary to the Society of Civil Engineers. These two posts he continued to occupy, with credit to himself and benefit to those institutions, until the year

1835, when, the Government having resolved to despatch Mr. Ellis on a mission to Persia, it was thought advisable to attach an intelligent military officer to the embassy, as military secretary; and my friend Stoddart was fixed upon for that highly important office.

When Mr. Ellis returned to England, Colonel Stoddart was sent on a special mission to the Um-meer of Bokhara.

Shortly afterwards intelligence reached England of his imprisonment, then a rumour was circulated of his execution; and the overland mail of June last brought an account that both these distinguished captives were still alive.

Of their captivity there can be no doubt; but I totally discredit the rumour of their assassination, for reasons that will be given at length in the course of this narrative.

I had long suffered great uneasiness about my poor friend, and had often thought of proceeding to Bokhara to ascertain his fate; this feeling was, however, checked by the reflection that, of course, Lord Aberdeen had done, and was doing, every thing that was possible. When, however, the intelligence was brought by the June overland mail that my friend was still alive, I began to suspect that Government had really no precise information on the subject; and, on the 13th June, I attended the levee of Lord Fitzroy Somerset, the Military Secretary, and handed to him a letter, in which I informed him that it was my intention to start immediately

for Bokhara, *at my own cost and risk*, to attempt the release of my friend Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly, if allowed to do so in the character of a British officer. His lordship listened to my appeal with the greatest attention; and I cannot think of the two interviews with which I was honoured by his lordship without feeling the deepest gratitude for the kind interest he took in behalf of my friend, and for the patience with which he listened to my anxious appeal, and I trust he will excuse my taking this public mode of thanking him.

On the 22d June, I received a note from Lord Fitzroy Somerset, suggesting that I should communicate with Lord Aberdeen on the subject of my letter of the 13th June.

I therefore addressed the following letter to the Earl of Aberdeen :—

“ Army and Navy Club, 22d June, 1843.

“ My Lord,

“ On the 13th instant I wrote to Lieutenant-General Lord Fitzroy Somerset, proposing to go to Bokhara, at my own cost and risk, to ascertain the fate, and attempt the release, of my friend Lieutenant-Colonel Stoddart.

“ I have this moment received a note from Lord Fitzroy Somerset, in which he suggests that I should address myself to your Lordship on the subject. I therefore take the liberty of requesting your Lordship to honour me with an interview.

“ I have the honour to be, &c.

“ JOHN GROVER,

“ Capt. Unattached.”

To this I received the following reply :—

“ Mr. Addington presents his compliments to Captain Grover, and, with reference to his letter to the Earl of Aberdeen of this day’s date, he requests Captain Grover to have the goodness to call upon him at the Foreign Office to-morrow, Friday, the 23d instant, at Two o’clock.

“ *Foreign Office,*
“ *June 22d.*”

I now considered my departure certain, went immediately to my bankers, ordered the sale of property, that I might have ample funds to meet the expenses of my expedition, and made other arrangements for an immediate departure, never for a moment doubting but that Lord Aberdeen was as anxious as I could possibly be to ascertain the fate of these unfortunate officers.

I was punctual to the Under-Secretary of State’s appointment, and was immediately admitted.

I began by presenting to Mr. Addington a copy of my letter to Lord Fitzroy Somerset, which contained a detail of my proposed plan of proceeding. He said a great deal to impress upon my mind the great danger that would attend the expedition.

I told him that I had well considered that point, that I possessed the ordinary degree of coolness and presence of mind; that I doubted not I should succeed in my object, or that, at least, I should

ascertain whether these gentlemen were still in existence.

Mr. Addington then said, that probably the best mode of proceeding would be to put me in possession of all the documents relating to Colonel Stoddart, that I might then take a day or two for reflection ; and, should I be still disposed to go, he would be happy to see me again.

I was then introduced to Mr. Hammond, who laid before me a mass of official and other papers.

Mr. Hammond called my particular attention to a long circumstantial statement made by a man with a long Persian name, which I do not recollect, and which was made still longer by the addition of an *alias*.

According to this account, Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly, with about thirty servants belonging to the latter, were confined in a deep, dark *well*, in which there was only one necessary, which was emptied but once a fortnight.

That Colonel Stoddart was one day brought into the Ummeer's presence, who spoke kindly to him, and told him to be of good cheer ; after a short time the Ummeer made a sign, and Colonel Stoddart was led out and stripped. A small piece of paper and a pencil were found concealed in his clothes : this being reported to the Ummeer, he became furious, asked Colonel Stoddart who gave him the paper, and with whom he was corresponding ? Colonel Stoddart refusing to tell, he was conducted

with Captain Conolly outside the town, and his head was cut off in the *presence of numerous spectators*.

Captain Conolly was now told, that if he would become a Mussulman his life should be spared. His reply was:—Colonel Stoddart has been a Mussulman these three years, yet you have destroyed him; I will die a Christian. He was immediately decapitated; and they were interred in graves which had been previously prepared.

The narrator further states that *he was not present at the execution*, but that he had seen the graves; and the executioner, some time after (two or three weeks, if I remember right), *offered to give him, or shew him, their heads*.

Mr. Hammond asked, “Did I not think this statement, this interesting, very circumstantial statement, conclusive?”

I replied, “By no means; in the first place, if this man be worthy of belief, which I am *rather* disposed to question, he merely reports what *another had told him*.”

“But,” rejoined Mr. Hammond, “the heads — the executioner offered to shew him the heads.”

“*Offered!* but, as the offer was not accepted, we have no proof that it was sincere; besides, two or three weeks after decapitation, in the climate of Bokhara, identification might, perhaps, have been no very easy matter; I therefore attach very little importance to this statement, unless confirmed by

other testimony : alone, I would not receive it as evidence."

(I will here make a remark, which did not occur to me when I was with Mr. Hammond. This man, as a Persian, is a sworn enemy of the people of Bokhara, one of the worst of enemies—a religious enemy. The Persians are followers of *Ali*, and curse most devoutly five times a day Omar, who is venerated by the people of Bokhara.)

Mr. Hammond seemed to admit the justness of my reasoning, and he then shewed me some other accounts. These only contained *rumours* of the execution, and stated they could not give precise accounts, as the *execution was private*.

I looked at Mr. Hammond with astonishment, told him that these accounts, instead of confirming the first, completely refuted it, the latter stating that the execution was private, and the former *circumstantial* one, distinctly and positively stated the execution to have been *public*, in the presence of *many people outside the town*. Now both these accounts cannot be *true*; and I am disposed to consider them both *false*, and not worthy of a moment's consideration.

Mr. Hammond appeared to feel the force of this reasoning also ; and I then called his attention to the most important document that was laid before me.

This was an account which was brought (if I recollect right) by the overland mail of June last,

and an extract from which was published in the newspapers, and which, in fact, was the cause of my present visit to the Foreign Office. This account was brought by a Jew, who was certified as being worthy of credit. He stated that he had lately left Bokhara; that Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly were both alive; that it had been reported that these officers had been executed, but that a Greek and a slave had been the real victims. This Jew offered to go immediately to Bokhara, to take a letter to Colonel Stoddart, and to bring an answer, if promised a "*chit*" on his return. This man, moreover, *asks for nothing until he does return.*

I saw nothing to lead me to imagine that this offer had been accepted, and I could not help expressing to Mr. Hammond my great surprise that, among the mass of documents before me, there was no indication that any effort had been made by the British Government to attempt the release of these unfortunate men, or even to ascertain the simple fact of their existence!

Mr. Hammond then searched among another package of papers, and put into my hands the copy of a letter from Lord Ellenborough to the Sovereign of Bokhara.

This letter begins by announcing his Lordship's arrival in India as the representative of the just and potent Sovereign of Great Britain, mentions some recent successes of the British arms, and concludes by saying, that he is informed that two English-

men are detained prisoners at Bokhara ; that all good and enlightened Sovereigns protect instead of injuring "*innocent travellers*;" he therefore trusts his majesty will immediately order their release, and he will engage that they shall never again enter his dominions.

My remark to Mr. Hammond on reading this letter was, that it was merely the copy of a letter *said* to have been sent, that there was no answer, nothing to shew that it had ever reached its destination. I saw, however, that Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly were described as "*innocent travellers*," when his Lordship well knew that they were *officers officially employed* by his Government on a special mission.

Having attentively perused all the documents Mr. Hammond had the kindness to lay before me I told him that I saw nothing to shake my original resolution, that I was now persuaded that my friend had not been murdered, and, as the Government had done nothing, it was necessary that I should start immediately.

Mr. Hammond asked, how did I propose reaching Bokhara ?

I told him that my intention was to apply to the Emperor of Russia for permission to descend the Volga to Astrakan, or to take the more direct route by Orenbourg, as I might be advised : that I doubted not the Emperor, when he considered my motives for undertaking this journey, would give

his consent. Having his consent, I was sure of his majesty's assistance, as he never did things by halves.

Arrived at Orenbourg, I should despatch a messenger to Khiva, stating distinctly the object of my journey, and asking permission to pass through the Khaun's territory, and also for an escort,* a similar letter I should send to the Ummeer of Bokhara. I should patiently wait at Orenbourg for a reply.

Should a favourable answer be returned, all would be well; should my application be refused — the probability of which I really could not contemplate — I should immediately return, and have to report the ill success of my expedition; even should it fail, with the means at my disposal I should be able to obtain much valuable information.

Mr. Hammond said he did not think the Emperor of Russia would allow me to pass through his territory, and he shewed me a letter from Baron Brunow, which stated that all communication was cut off between Russia and Bokhara, that the Ummeer was desirous of sending an ambassador to St. Petersburg, and had been refused.

I expressed my surprise how, reasoning upon the same premises, Mr. Hammond and I always came to such opposite conclusions: now this letter induced me to believe that, as the Ummeer was so desirous of being on good terms with Russia, an

* Should the Khaun of Khiva have refused his consent, I could have taken the caravan route to the east of the sea of Aral.

Englishman coming through that kingdom would certainly be well received. With respect to the Emperor, I felt no doubt, notwithstanding Mr. Hammond's opinion to the contrary, that his majesty would assist instead of opposing my plan; *that*, however, could be soon ascertained.

Mr. Hammond then said: — "But why not proceed by Persia? we have a resident at Teheran who would assist you. The road to Mushed is open, and the caravans pass from Mushed to Bokhara."

"Of course that is the readiest route; but I took it for granted that *there must be some insuperable difficulties on that side*, or our resident at Teheran would certainly ere this have obtained at least some intelligence of the prisoners. However, I am prepared to start immediately by any route that you may advise."

"But," he continued, "should you even succeed in getting to Bokhara, it is not certain that you will then obtain the information you desire. Suppose now Colonel Stoddart dead, it by no means follows that the Khaun will shew you his body or inform you of the fact."

"Then, as I before said, I must acknowledge my failure. But, instead of supposing him dead, I will suppose that he is living, and that the Ummeer receives me kindly, and says: 'As you have come so far through so many dangers to see your friend, you shall not be disappointed; go, console your

friend — make his heart glad ; I will then talk to you about his release.'

" Now I will suppose that I am conducted to the '*dark well*;' that I hear a faint, languid voice say: 'What! are you come at last to drag me to execution?'

" I reply, 'Have you forgotten me?'

" 'Surely I should know that voice. What! — Grover?'

" 'Yes, my dear friend, I am come to bring you news of your family — to tell you that your *country has not forgotten you*, and that the Government is now, though late, taking measures for your release.'

I told Mr. Hammond that I had as much right to suppose this as he had to imagine the death of my unfortunate friend, and that I trusted that my supposition would prove the correct one.

I now told Mr. Hammond that I was determined to start as soon as possible, and that I should like to see Mr. Addington. Mr. Hammond suggested that I should take a day to deliberate. I told him there was no occasion for deliberation, nor time to be lost, and that I should like to see Mr. Addington immediately, if he were at leisure.

I was again ushered to the presence of the Under-Secretary of State, who seemed surprised that my determination was not shaken.

He then said that he saw no objection to my proceeding as a private traveller, if so disposed. I

told him that for that I did not require his sanction; but that as a "private traveller" I should be imprisoned as a spy, long before reaching Bokhara. That all I asked was permission to go as an English officer, that I should wear my uniform, which would be my best safeguard. Should this be refused, I must give up the enterprise.

Mr. Addington then said, that the expedition would be attended with so much danger, that he did not think Lord Aberdeen would feel himself justified in granting my request. I urged the point some time, bringing forward some of the arguments I had used with Mr. Hammond, and took my leave after remaining above two hours at the Foreign Office. At parting, I requested Mr. Addington distinctly to understand that I was prepared to start immediately, that I had made my preparations, and that I did not require the least assistance. That I took upon myself all the *expense, risk, and responsibility*, and merely asked permission to be allowed to go as a British officer.

On the 26th June, I received a note from Mr. Addington, declining my proposition; but in this note my proposition was so completely mis-stated, that I instantly wrote to him the following:—

" Army and Navy Club,

" June 25th, 1843.

" SIR,

" I have received your note of the 24th instant, and take the liberty merely of observing, that in referring to

my proposition, you omit all notice of its most important feature, viz. that the expedition was to be undertaken at my own '*cost and risk.*'

"As it is usual in all official correspondence to allude to a proposition as nearly as possible in the terms in which it was made, I trust you will have the goodness to correct this omission.

"I have the honour to be,

"Your obedient servant,

"JOHN GROVER,

"*Captain Unattached.*

"*To Henry Unwin Addington, Esq.,*

"*Under-Secretary of State,*

"*Foreign Affairs.*"

In reply, I received the following note, with an inclosure, the wording of which was quite satisfactory, although the refusal was a cruel disappointment.

"Mr. Addington presents his compliments to Captain Grover, and has great pleasure in correcting the omission which had by an oversight been made in Mr. Addington's note of the 24th instant, and to which Captain Grover has called Mr. Addington's attention in his letter of to-day.

"Mr. Addington requests that Captain Grover will have the goodness to substitute the corrected version of the note herewith inclosed for the former note, and that he will return the latter to Mr. Addington.

"*Foreign Office,*

"*26th June, 1843.*"

Here follows the "corrected version" of the note, which I found inclosed :—

" Mr. Addington presents his compliments to Captain Grover, and begs to inform him that he has laid before Lord Aberdeen Captain Grover's desire to proceed, at his own cost and risk, to Bokhara, in the character of a British officer officially sent in order to obtain intelligence as to the fate of Colonel Stoddart.

" Lord Aberdeen stated to Mr. Addington, that he would not feel himself justified in investing Captain Grover with an official character, but that his Lordship would very willingly afford to Captain Grover every facility, and grant him every protection at his command, for the purpose of prosecuting his researches with greater effect, if Captain Grover should be disposed to proceed to Bokhara as a private traveller for the purpose above-mentioned.

" *Foreign Office,*

" *June 24th, 1843.*"

" *To Captain Grover.*"

This terminated my correspondence with the Foreign Office, and I cannot help expressing my regret that his Lordship did not condescend to honour me with the interview I took the liberty of soliciting at the suggestion of the Military Secretary, instead of handing me over to irresponsible subalterns. I say "*irresponsible*," because, although these excellent, talented, and honourable gentlemen may be responsible to him, it is his Lordship alone who is responsible to the nation ; and I now inform

his Lordship that he will be held personally responsible for any disaster that may now befall these gallant fellows ; and, should they be now sacrificed, their blood must lie on the conscience of my Lord Aberdeen.

Mr. Addington having ascertained from me distinctly that I would *not* go “ *as a private traveller,*” as it would be walking into the tiger’s jaws, without the least chance of succeeding in the object of my journey, Lord Aberdeen refuses what I ask, and very generously offers what I did not ask—what I did not want, and what he had previously ascertained I would *not* accept.

Lord Aberdeen knows that, as “ *a private traveller,*” my mission *must fail*, and that my destruction would be certain.

Imagine a “ private traveller” sending in *his card* to the sovereign of Bokhara, and saying, after presenting his compliments, that he would be much obliged to him,—in fact, that he would consider it as a personal favour, if the Ummeer would deliver up to him two British officers whom he had detained five years unjustly in confinement, and who were not thought worthy, by their own Government, of being claimed.

Would he not immediately order his head to be cut off, and his carcase stuck up as a scarecrow to frighten away other “ *private travellers?* ”

I really see but one chance the “ *private traveller*” would have of escaping: all Mussulmans have

a great respect and reverence for idiots and madmen, and our "*private traveller*" might have the good fortune to be considered of this category, and, instead of losing his head, he might have the good fortune of merely finding himself minus his eyebrows.

On the 6th of July I read the following in the *Morning Herald* newspaper :—

“ PROPOSAL FOR THE LIBERATION OF COLONEL STODDART AND CAPTAIN CONOLLY.

“ *To all the Officers of the British Army.*

“ 13 *Richmond Green, Richmond, July 2.*

“ Gentlemen,

“ Though a missionary and a clergyman myself, and not an officer, I do not take up my pen in order to excite your sympathy in behalf of a clergyman or missionary, but in behalf of two of your fellow-officers, Captain Conolly and Colonel Stoddart, who are at present captives in the great city of Bokhara ; but having been myself two months at Bokhara, and knowing, as I do, the character of the inhabitants of Bokhara, I am fully convinced that the report of their having been put to death is exceedingly doubtful—much more so by the source from which the report originated.

“ If, therefore, one of you, gentlemen, would be inclined to accompany me to Bokhara, or merely pay the expenses of my journey there, I am ready to go there; and I am fully confident that I shall be able, with God’s help, to liberate them from captivity, with the assistance of my Turcoman friends in the desert of Khiva, and one of the dervishes ; but I would undertake the journey

without making myself responsible to the British Government, and entirely on my own responsibility.

“ I merely want the expense of the journey, and not *one single farthing as a compensation*, even in case of complete success.

“ I shall be ten days more at Richmond, Surrey ; if, therefore, one of you brave officers is now ready to accompany me, or to assist me in making the journey, let him come to me, and we may talk over the matter more fully.

“ I am, Gentlemen,

“ Your humble obedient Servant,

“ JOSEPH WOLFF,

“ Late Curate of High Hoyland, Yorkshire,
formerly Missionary in Persia, Bokhara,
and Affghanistan.”

I was not acquainted with Dr. Wolff, except by reputation. I immediately wrote and made an appointment for the following day.

I found that Dr. Wolff was well acquainted with Captain Conolly, who had, on one occasion, clothed and relieved him, when he escaped from captivity in a state of utter destitution. He expressed in warm terms his gratitude for the benefits he had received from Captain Conolly, and his anxiety of assisting in his deliverance.

He told me that he had written to Lord Aberdeen, proposing to go to Bokhara ; and his lordship's reply was (if I correctly understood the reverend doctor) declining the offer, as he intended relying upon Providence !

The expense of the whole journey to Bokhara and back, including presents, the doctor estimates at 500*l*.

This sum, I told him, I doubted not could be easily raised ; and I trust that the friends of Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly will assist me in despatching to Bokhara, with as little delay as possible, this excellent man.

Dr. Wolff feels quite confident that these gentlemen have not been murdered : he discredits *in toto* the assertion that Colonel Stoddart had turned Mussulman, and the romance of the "*dark well* ;" and believes, on the contrary, that they will be kindly treated during their captivity.

I communicated to him my proposal to Government. He said, as a "*private traveller*" I should be looked upon as a spy, and that I should never succeed in reaching Bokhara ; but as a recognised British officer, in my uniform, I should have no difficulty whatever ; that he himself intends wearing his robes as a Protestant clergyman, and his doctor's hood.

Dr. Wolff is well acquainted with Persian and the Bokhara dialect, and has now in his possession a passport of the Ummeer.

Dr. Wolff is now at Bruges, assisting in the duties of the English Church, and he will there wait the result of the present appeal.

I am most glad to find that Lord Aberdeen trusts in Providence ; I also trust most devoutly in

Providence, still I think that the nature of our reliance is very different.

My firm belief is, that if the friends of Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly exert themselves at the present moment, and that if Dr. Wolff zealously fulfils the mission he is about to undertake, I then sincerely believe that the Almighty will bless our endeavours ; but I do not for a moment imagine that the order of the universe will be disturbed, or a miracle performed.

I do not know if this be orthodox, but the reader will have the kindness to recollect that I am but a mere soldier.

I was very anxious to obtain some information as to the cause of Colonel Stoddart's imprisonment. I saw no document at the Foreign Office that alluded to this, and although I received greedily all the information that was given me, and made my comments pretty freely, as the reader will have remarked, upon the documents that were laid before me, I did not, however, presume to ask any questions, anxious as I was on this subject.

A work has, however, issued from the press, since my visit to the Foreign Office, which gives some very interesting information on this point. It is entitled, " Narrative of a Journey from Heraut to Khiva, Moscow, &c. ; by Captain James Abbott, Bengal Artillery, lately on a Political Mission."

I find the following at page 36, vol. i :—

“ Colonel Stoddart’s old servant also accompanied us, following me some distance after I had taken leave of the Berg. I fell into company with him, and found it to be his firm conviction that the imprisonment of Colonel Stoddart was owing to a letter written by the Vuzeer Yar Muhammeed to the Ummeer of Bokhara.

“ This man has since visited Bokhara, with the view of effecting Colonel Stoddart’s release.

“ His opinion jumps with a conviction I have long felt. It is well known that terms of defiance passed between Colonel Stoddart and the Vuzeer, which the latter was the last man in the world to forget or forgive. An outward reconciliation had taken place, but could but serve to inflame, by suppressing, the resentment of such a fiend as Yar Muhammeed.

“ It would appear that the Vuzeer, in addition to his letter to the Ummeer, sent a man of his own in company with Colonel Stoddart ; and to this man’s advice are attributed all the evil consequences that fell upon Colonel Stoddart, whom he had persuaded to believe him an attached follower.”

I find, however, in page 89, the opinion of the Khaun of Khiva, which shews not only why the Khaun of Bokhara should detain Colonel Stoddart, but leads me to believe he would be kindly treated during his captivity.

The conversation between the Khaun and Captain Abbot is as follows :—

“Are you friends or enemies of Bokhara?”

“We sent an ambassador to Bokhara to offer the Ummeer friendship. He was afterwards to have proceeded, I believe, to Khiva, with similar offers to your Majesty; but the Ummeer, violating the laws of nations and the rights of hospitality, seized and imprisoned him. Such an act, unless speedily redressed, may bring the vengeance of my Government upon Bokhara. Your Majesty must have influence with the Ummeer, and would do an important benefit to the Mussulman world in exerting it for the liberation of Colonel Stoddart, for the British are extremely reluctant to enter into war with any of the Moslem states, their natural allies.”

“I am on terms of defiance; he will not listen to me.”

“But his ambassador was lately at Khiva.”

“He departed without obtaining his object; the Ummeer is mad.”

“Your Majesty is a friend and ally of the King of Kokaun. If both yourself and that monarch should urge the release of Colonel Stoddart, the Ummeer would not dare refuse.”

“The Ummeer thinks, from the pains you take for Colonel Stoddart’s release, that he is some very great man; and, as he fears you will some day molest *him*, detains him to exchange for some city, or some high ransom.”

“Would your Government give any high sum for his release?”

“ My queen has thousands of subjects, the equals in birth and rank to Colonel Stoddart. Had Colonel Stoddart been taken in war, a ransom might probably be thought of. But he was the Ummeer’s guest, and the representative of my king at the time of his seizure. The insult, if not redressed, may be avenged. So far from the Ummeer gaining a city in exchange for Colonel Stoddart, were he to ask only a single rupee, the British Government would refuse the demand with scorn. The pains we have taken for Colonel Stoddart’s release proceed from our reluctance to war with any of the states of Islaum. But for this reluctance, we had long ago sent a couple of thousand soldiers to drive the Ummeer out of his kingdom.”

At page 169, vol. i. I find the following :—

“ At my next audience, the Khaun Huzurut informed me that the Ummeer of Bokhara had sent a decided negative to his (the Khaun’s) two several remonstrances for the release of Colonel Stoddart. The reply of the Ummeer was,—

“ ‘ You have one English eelchie, what would you do with another ? Do you grudge me one ? ’ ”

“ I replied that I deeply regretted the Ummeer’s insanity ; but that the Khaun Huzurut’s friendly attention to the request of my Government could not be impaired by the conduct of the Ummeer, but was as precious as if crowned with the desired success.

“ I begged, in the name of my Government, to offer his Majesty the warmest thanks.”

The most interesting passage in Captain Abbott's book relating to Colonel Stoddart, I find in page 120, vol. i. He says :—

“Speaking of Colonel Stoddart, the Khaun said, I hear that the Russian Ambassador at Bokhara applied to the Ummeer for Colonel Stoddart's freedom, and that he should be delivered for the purpose to the Russian Government. That, upon this, the Ummeer summoned Colonel Stoddart, and asked him whether the Russians were likely to treat him well, and what he thought of the proposal; and that Colonel Stoddart replied, ‘The Russians would undoubtedly treat me well; but, when my own Government demands me, what will your Highness answer?’

“That the Ummeer was much struck with the nobleness of such an answer from one who was in prison, and in hourly danger of death; and, taking off his own rich cloak of sables, made them clothe Colonel Stoddart in it, and lead him on horseback through Bokhara.

“This anecdote, which the Khaun fully credited, I have not, to this day, means of confirming or contradicting. It accords so well, however, with the spirit of this high-minded officer, whose sufferings were paralleled only by his fortitude, that I had no difficulty in believing it.

“General Perroffski afterwards confirmed the fact of his attempt to release Colonel Stoddart.”

Poor Stoddart! The Ummeer talks of releasing

him at the solicitation of Russia, and he innocently replies, "when my *own Government demands me*, what will your Highness answer?" His "*own Government*," indeed! If he be not released until his own Government demands him, I fear he will have long, very long to wait.

The conduct of this brave fellow excites the admiration even of the Ummeer of Bokhara, savage as he is represented to be, and he clothes his prisoner in his own royal robes and parades him through the town, as an example to, and for the admiration of, the whole people of Bokhara. And are we to allow this noble fellow to languish in captivity when an effort now may save him and his fellow-sufferer? God forbid! I feel satisfied that this appeal, humble and incapable as is the individual who makes it, will not be made in vain, and that I shall soon be able to despatch the good and pious missionary Wolff on this glorious expedition, and that, before the summer of the approaching year, we shall see these sufferers restored to their family and friends, and that country, whose honour they have preferred to both family and friends, nay, to liberty, and perhaps, to life.

Had Stoddart accepted the mediation of the Russian Ambassador, he might have been now happy in the bosom of his family, but he, like a trusty soldier, would receive liberty only at the demand of his own gracious sovereign.

I envy Doctor Wolff the mission he is (I hope)

about to undertake. He is far better fitted for it than I should have been ; and, had I known he had proposed himself, I should never have volunteered my services ; but I must say, that I would rather return to my country, with these gallant soldiers restored to liberty, than with fifty standards taken after the destruction of ten thousand of her most dreaded enemies.

When I first read this account in Captain Abbott's entertaining book, I was almost surprised that the Ummeer did not restore him to liberty ; and I am rather inclined to attribute his detention to that curious letter of Lord Ellenborough, which Mr. Hammond exhibited to me as a proof (and it was the only proof he did exhibit) that the British Government had made *one* effort for his release.

Now I most devoutly hope that that letter never did reach its destination.

Let us reflect a moment ; Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly were sent to the Court of Bokhara on a special mission, as regular eelchies or ambassadors.

Now the sovereigns of these semi-savage countries are remarkably suspicious, and are always very much disposed to consider *soi-disant* eelchies as spies.

I will suppose that the Ummeer's unjust suspicions were excited by the letter received from the Vuzeer Yar Muhammeed, and from the evil reports

of the scoundrel this Vuzeer contrived to attach to Colonel Stoddart's suite ; I will suppose I say, that these malicious reports are removed by Colonel Stoddart's noble refusal of the mediation of General Perroffski.

At this moment arrives the Governor-General of India's letter, which tells the Ummeer that they are "*innocent travellers* ;" or, in another word, SPIES !

Now, something like the following scene would undoubtedly take place :—

The reader will have the kindness to imagine the hall of state in the palace ; near the wall at the far end, lounging upon some cushions with his face turned towards Mecca and the door, as they happen to be in the same direction, is seen the Ummeer. The room is crowded with all that is noble in Bokhara ; at the monarch's left hand, half a brigade-major's distance in the rear, stands an important minister of state, who, in France, is politely called *le mattre des hautes œuvres*.

This gentleman looks complacently at a cimeter which reposes quietly on his right arm, and ever and anon glances slyly at the end of a "bowstring," which peeps out of his left sleeve. Imagine two fatigued messengers crouched in one corner, with the perspiration in large drops running down their black beards.

The Ummeer is violently excited, but, on being

told that Stoddart Sahib approaches, he strokes his beard and endeavours to look perfectly cool and indifferent.

Stoddart Sahib advances respectfully but gaily, glancing with a little pride at the "Cloak of Sables," and he perceives the messengers crouched in a corner, knows by their dress that they are from Hindoostan. Thoughts of dear absent friends pass rapidly across his mind ; he feels at once that he has not been *abandoned by his country* ; that he is not forgotten ; scenes of liberty, honours, recompenses for his past sufferings, become so vivid, appear so real, that he can hardly master his emotions. Now, indeed, he feels thankful that he had the resolution to refuse the interference of Russia. He, however, becomes agitated, flushed, and pale, by turns.

The Ummeer pretends not to perceive Stoddart's emotions, casts a glance at him that seems to pierce his innermost soul ; he receives him, however, with a complacent smile, and in a bland tone desires him to approach.

The following dialogue then takes place :—

STODDART (*with profound reverence.*)

"Salaam Alikoom !"

The UMMEER.

"Alikoom Salaam ! The sight of those strangers seems to affect thee, Stoddart Sahib."

STODDART.

" It does, may it please your gracious Majesty. Their sight is more welcome to my soul than the cool spring to the wanderer in the desert. By their attire, I see they come from Hindoostan ; by the sweat that hangs upon their brow, I see they have come in haste, like messengers of joyful tidings. Oh! *Ullah kurreem!* (God is merciful!) Have they not come to negotiate my release? Your good and gracious Majesty has sent for me to bless me with that word, so short, but oh! how precious—liberty! Bismillah! (In the name of God!) I entreat your Majesty—say it!"

UMMEER.

" Compose thyself, O Stoddart Sahib, and listen to my voice. They *say* they are thy friends, and come in thy behalf; but I suspect they are vile impostors—rascally spies. I have sent for thee, O Stoddart Sahib, to have thy opinion: brush away, therefore, the cobwebs from thine eyelids and tell me what thou seest."

[*The UMMEER takes from a splendid blue satin bag a large letter, gives the envelope to Colonel Stoddart and retains the inclosed letter.*

The UMMEER (*after a pause*).

“ Well, good Stoddart Sahib, thou hast examined that seal and writing, now tell me truly, as thou hopest thy mother’s grave may never be defiled, the contents of this despatch, may they be received with confidence ? ”

STODDART.

“ Oh ! indeed, they may. This letter comes from the good, the great, the pious, and virtuous Emir, Lord Ellenborough, who now represents my most gracious Sovereign in Hindoostan. May his shadow never be less ! ”

[STODDART *kisses the envelope three times with respectful affection.*

The UMMEER (*in a furious tone*).

“ Listen, now, O Stoddart Sahib ; or rather, O son of Shitân ! for such indeed thou must be. Whose dog art thou, son of an unclean quadruped, that thou shouldst come so far to laugh at our sacred beard ?

“ In this letter, which thou sayest is as worthy of belief as the sacred volume of our Holy Prophet, know that *thou art denounced by thine own chief as a spy !* Look and satisfy thyself.

“ I will then hear patiently what thou hast to say, before I determine upon thy sentence.”

STODDART (*in great agitation*).

"There is some extraordinary mistake in this despatch. Your Majesty will perceive that Conolly Sahib and myself are said to be '*innocent travellers*;' and then the Emir Ellenborough adds, 'That if your Majesty will order our release, *he* will undertake that we shall never more enter your Majesty's dominions.' Now your Majesty, who knows all things, must be aware that the Emir Ellenborough can have no power over us, were we "*innocent travellers*." It is only as servants of the Government that he can exercise any control whatever, and prevent our re-entering your Majesty's dominions. Your Majesty is, however, so well acquainted with the British constitution, that it would be useless to say any thing further on that point."

The UMMEER.

"One thing is quite clear, either Lord Ellenborough or thou hast said the *thing which is not*. When, however, I think of thy noble conduct in refusing to accept liberty at the solicitation of the Russian Eelchie, Perroffski Sahib, my heart softens towards thee, and I cannot bring myself to think that *thou art base enough to lie*."

[*The Ummeer then wipes a tear that had fallen upon his beard, takes the kuliaun from his own mouth, hands it to Stoddart, who smokes with great violence, and the curtain falls.*]

I have treated this as a farce, being convinced from the then state of the intervening country occupied by hostile bands in arms, that Lord Ellenborough's extraordinary letter, if *ever sent*, could not have reached its destination. Should it unfortunately have got to Bokhara, I very much fear that my stupid farce would be turned into a dreadful tragedy.

One of the evils of a mixed form of government like ours, is, that responsibility is so much divided that it can scarcely be said to exist. I ask who is responsible for the fate of Colonel Stoddart? and echo only answers, "Who?"

In a despotic government, the Sovereign is responsible, and considers any benefit conferred upon the nation as a personal benefit conferred upon himself, and holds himself bound in honour to render all possible assistance to those who may suffer in endeavouring to benefit the nation.

It must be in the memory of all my readers the long period that Captain Ross and his noble band were allowed to remain blocked up in the snow of the polar regions; the numerous applications that were made to the Admiralty, who for a long time turned a deaf ear to all these solicitations, and refused to go to the expense of a *cock-boat* to ascertain the fate of these gallant fellows. I rather think the Admiralty put forward as an excuse, that they considered Captain Ross and his brave companions as "*innocent travellers*."

While attending the Scientific Congress at Florence, two years ago, as a Fellow of our Royal Society, the subject of my friend Stoddart's captivity was often the subject of conversation, and I was frequently, as a British officer, appealed to for information. I well recollect the remark of a distinguished French officer. "If these men had been Frenchmen, they would have been free long since." The reader will probably smile at this as *bombast*; but I will venture to say, that had Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly been Frenchmen, *Louis Philippe* would have left no means untried to obtain their release: that there would have been no occasion whatever for an offer like mine; but, that, had it been made, it would most probably have been accepted, and most certainly the proposer would have been *thanked*.

I trust the reader will be of opinion that I have made good the serious charge that I have preferred against the Government, viz. that not only has it not attempted the release of Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly, but that it "*has not even taken the trouble of ascertaining the simple fact of their existence.*"

That was my assertion; and I think I have brought forward ample proofs that my assertion was well founded.

I have, however, now before me, the *Morning Herald* of June 22d, 1843.

It contains a report of what passed the previous

day at a General Court of the Proprietors of East India Stocks. From this report I make the following extract :—

“ Mr. Weeding said there were painful reports abroad of the murder of Captains Conolly and Stoddart in India. Were the Court of Directors in possession of any authentic information on the subject ?

“ The Chairman said, the Court of Directors had no other information than that possessed by honourable proprietors through the medium of the newspapers.

“ In answer to another remark from Mr. Weeding, which did not reach us, the Honourable Chairman said, that the last accounts on the subject were considered more favourable.

“ The Government of India would be, no doubt, quite alive to the necessity of obtaining the most correct information on the subject.”

If any one in this country knew any thing about these officers, it must be the *Chairman of the East India Company* ; and he coolly informs his constituents, that all he knows is, that he *knows nothing*.

It appears, however, that he has the good sense not to believe the Persian's circumstantial narrative ; and there is the consoling declaration, that the Government of India will now be “ *quite alive*,” after having been for the last four years in a state of *suspended animation* !

I trust, however, that this hope, that the Government of India will now *be quite alive*, will not satisfy the public, nor the friends of Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly, but that immediate measures will be taken for sending Dr. Wolff to Bokhara.

Any persons disposed to assist the Reverend Dr. Wolff in his contemplated expedition to Bokhara are requested to address Captain Grover, at the Army and Navy Club, who will be happy to explain to them the plan proposed.

August, 1843.

